

How to Recognize and Support the Gifted Child?

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Have you ever found yourself surprised that your child used a difficult word, and knew exactly how to use it even though you never taught it to them? Maybe you've noticed your child talk about a concept that seemed rather abstract for his/her age. Or perhaps you caught your sweet child in the middle of a lie at the tender age of two. If you find yourself agreeing with any of the above, you might very well have a gifted and talented child on your hands.



What is Giftedness?

Many people assume that a gifted child is simply an overachiever; sometimes we think of them as well-behaved perfectionists. While this may be true of many gifted children (and not so true for many others) giftedness has very little to do with the willingness to complete academic work, and more to do with a child's individual intelligence and

cognitive skills. In fact, many gifted and talented children are in fact underachievers in school.

There's many ways to define a gifted child, but all theorists agree that giftedness in a child means that a child demonstrates a potential for performance that is more advanced than peers.

How to Learn if Your Kid is Gifted?

In most states, giftedness is not tested until at least kindergarten, or perhaps later, depending on the programs available within your school district. However, there are many early signs that can help you determine if you have a gifted kid on your hands. Be on the lookout for these characteristics:

- Your child seems to have a better memory than other kids the same age;
- Your child uses words, or understands concepts that seem much too abstract or advanced for his/her age;
- They seem to learn some skills on their own, without your needing to teach them;
- A constant hunger for exploration and investigation to learn more about the world;
- Your child prefers older playmates.

If you suspect your child may be gifted, that's great! But don't get carried away thinking that your child is guaranteed for future success. On the contrary, giftedness does not necessarily give your child an academic advantage, and even sometimes leads a child to underachieve due to boredom. If you think your child may be gifted, supporting your child in the right way is vital to his/her success.

How to Support a Gifted Learner?

The main focus of supporting giftedness is enrichment. Keeping your child sufficiently challenged is key. If you think your child might be gifted, try the following:



Avoid using the term "gifted" with your child

Giftedness shouldn't make your child feel better than other children. Moreover, your child may find it difficult to fit in with playmates, or feel burdened with lofty expectations. Try

not to make your child feels as if he/she constantly needs to do or learn more just because he/she might be gifted.

Offer a variety of high-quality and challenging activities

Keep your little learner challenged by offering many types of academic play. Practice with flashcards, worksheets, or download the best [educational iPad apps for kids](#) for self-directed learning.

But... don't overdo it on the academics

Offer your gifted child a wide array of learning opportunities. Take them to museums, or if they're interested, sign them up for dance, gymnastics, or piano lessons. Your child can dictate what special interests their interest will lead the charge.

When your child enters kindergarten, inquire about testing to identify whether or not they're gifted. Your school or district may offer support or a program to help supplement and meet your child's needs. Quench his or her thirst for learning by getting to know what interests drive their fascination, and offering multiple ways for your child to explore those topics.

In doing so, you will make sure your child avoids falling into the trap of boredom and underachievement. Continue offering the same opportunities throughout your child's schooling, and your child's potential will blossom beyond your imaginings.

